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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF INSURANCE LEGISLATORS (NCOIL)

Consumer Protection Towing Model Act

Adopted by the NCOIL Property & Casualty Committee on July 12, 2018 and the NCOIL Executive Committee on July 15, 2018
Sponsored by Rep. Matt Lehman (IN)

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Section 1. Title

This Act shall be known and cited as the [State] Consumer Protection Towing Act. **Actually the Insurance Industry Self-Preservation Act, there seems to be little in this proposal to protect a consumer. Most of it deals with the ability to justify a bill paid by an insurance company.**

Section 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Act is to establish minimum standards for towing vendor services and to promote fair and honest practices in the towing service business. **In the northeast we are already heavily regulated by the different states. There is a big difference between an invoice for a tow/recovery made out by the tow company to cover its expenses and the invoice the insurance company expects "in their viewpoint"**

Section 3. Definitions

For purposes of this Act:

“Automobile club services” - shall include, but not be limited to, the assumption of or reimbursement of the expense or a portion thereof for towing of a motor vehicle, emergency road service, matters relating to the operation, use, and maintenance of a motor vehicle, and the supplying of services which includes, augments, or is incidental to theft or reward services, discount services, arrest bond services, lock and key services, trip interruption services, and legal fee reimbursement services in defense of traffic related offenses.

“Recovery service” - a form of towing service which involves moving vehicles by the use of a wheel-lift device, such as a lift, crane, hoist, winch, cradle, jack, automobile ambulance, tow dolly, or any other similar device. **A procedure performed by a towing service that may include the movement of vehicles, on or off the traveled portion of the roadway, with a crane, hoist, lift, cradle, jack, winch, tow dolly or any similar device to ready them for tow or transport. Cleanup of the accident scene (responsibility and payment) should also be addressed somewhere in this definition.**

Cleanup of the accident scene – Removal of vehicular accident debris from the accident site, may also include removal of highway debris, trees, signs, rails etc. as directed by the incident management supervisor.

“Emergency towing” – the towing of a vehicle due to a motor vehicle accident, mechanical breakdown on public roadway or other emergency related incident necessitating vehicle removal for public safety with or without the owner’s consent. **The towing or transportation of a disabled motor vehicle due to an accident, mechanical breakdown or other emergency related incident necessitating the removal of the vehicle consensually or non-consensually.**

“Consensual towing” - a tow performed at the request of the vehicle owner, operator or person having legal custody of the vehicle.

“Non-Consensual towing” – a tow performed at the request or direction of law enforcement or at the direction of a private property owner usually without the consent of the vehicles owner.

“Flat bed (Roll-back) service” - a form of towing service which involves moving **(transporting)** vehicles by loading them onto a flat-bed platform.

“Government agency towing” – the towing of government-owned or government controlled vehicles by the government agency that owns or controls them.

“Law enforcement towing” – the towing of a vehicle for law enforcement purposes other than “seizure towing.” The term includes towing for law enforcement purposes that is performed by a towing company under a contract with the State, a local unit, or a law enforcement agency of the State or local unit; or on behalf of the State, a local unit, or a law enforcement agency of the State or local unit. **Usually referred to as a non-consensually towed vehicle.**

“Motor vehicle” – any vehicle that is manufactured primarily for use on public streets, roads and highways (not including a vehicle operated exclusively on a rail or rails) **propelled or drawn by any nonmuscular power. (delete ; and has at least four (4) wheels – need to include**

motorcycles.)

“Owner” - the person or entity to whom a motor vehicle is registered **and/or titled** to, or to whom it is leased, if the terms of the lease require the lessee to maintain and repair the vehicle, [or a person or entity that holds a lien on the motor vehicle – **this should be deleted as the lienholder is exempted from ownership definitions**]. For the purposes of this Act, a rental vehicle company is the owner of a motor vehicle rented pursuant to a rental agreement. **There may be conflicts in state laws regarding the rental company being the “owner” of the vehicle when the vehicle is being operated by a rental customer and the application of different insurance laws. An additional definition may be required to separate a leased vehicle from a rental vehicle. Rental vehicles are “rented” for a period not to exceed 30 days. Rental vehicles are always registered in the name of the rental company.**

Leased vehicle – a vehicle which is “leased” for period exceeding 30 days, leased vehicles may be registered in the lessee’s name or in the name of the lease company depending on what state you are in. There are different insurance requirements for the “leased” vehicle if and when the state considers the “lessee” the owner

“Owner requested towing” – the request to tow a vehicle by or on behalf of the vehicle owner or operator, this is referred to as a consensual tow, it includes a lien holder taking legal possession of the vehicle or any person having legal custody of the vehicle, it also includes an auto club tow

“Private property towing” – the towing of a motor vehicle, without the owner’s consent, from private property on which the motor vehicle was illegally parked, or for which some exigent circumstance necessitated its removal to another location.

“Towing service” – a function performed with a towing or recovery vehicle by a licensed, registered, and insured towing company in accord with state law and any Federal law that may apply. This may or may not include responsibility for cleanup of the accident scene, attachment of loose parts, partial disassembly of the vehicle to enable it to be towed etc.

Would suggest additional definitions for primary tow and secondary tow (move).

“Primary tow” – the initial tow from the scene of an accident or disablement by the towing service summoned to the scene, the tow is generally to the storage location of the towing service.

“Secondary tow” – the movement of the vehicle from the storage area to another location as directed by the owner or law enforcement

Would the owner of the vehicle include the insurance company once the titled owner released ownership to them?

“Notification to vehicle owner” would include all fees for mailings, administrative costs, system access and information fees. These would be paid in addition to the tow.

“Rental vehicle company” – any person or organization, or any subsidiary or affiliate, including a franchisee, in the business of renting vehicles to the public for a period of 30 days or less.

Need to define a lease vehicle to differentiate it from a rental

“Seizure towing” – the towing of a motor vehicle for law enforcement purposes involving the maintenance of the chain of custody of evidence, or forfeiture of assets.

“Storage facility” – any lot, facility, or other property used to store motor vehicles that have been removed from another location by a tow truck. Does TRAA want to insert a standard for a storage lot such as “lighted and protected” or “fenced”?

“Tow truck” - a motor vehicle equipped to provide any form of towing or transportation service, [delete this reference to recovery service including recovery service or flat bed service].

“Tow truck operator” – an individual who operates a tow truck as an employee or agent of a towing company. Does this exclude operations conducted by clubs (AAA with commercially plated trucks) and commercially registered tow trucks that only perform consensual vehicle movement? I would imagine that this definition would only include the companies included in the definition of a “towing company”

“Towing company” - any service, company or business that tows or otherwise moves motor vehicles by means of a tow truck or owns or operates a storage lot. A towing business, service or company shall not include an automobile club, car dealership or insurance company. A towing business, service or company shall be licensed by the state that they are located and operating in.

Section 4. General Provisions

The provisions of this Act shall be applicable to any entity or person engaging in, or offering to engage in, the business of providing towing service in the State of XXXX. The provisions of this chapter shall not apply to vehicles towed into the State of XXXX or through the State of XXXX if the tow originates in another jurisdiction.

The provisions of this Act are not applicable to the towing of motor vehicles by or on behalf of an “automobile club”, car dealership or insurance company. Automobile clubs and car dealerships do perform towing under a number of different situations – it would seem to be a problem to simply exclude them. The definition of the towing company in this proposal excludes them as towing companies. It would be a better idea to reference non-consensual/consensual tows.

The provisions of this Act are not applicable to “government agency towing”, the towing of government-owned or government controlled (leased ????) vehicles by the government agency that owns or controls them.

The provisions of this Act are not applicable to “seizure towing”, the towing of a vehicle for law enforcement purposes. This Act should clarify what the situation changes to once the vehicle is released by the law enforcement agency.

The provisions of this Act confer exclusive regulatory jurisdiction to the [regulatory body] in the State of XXXX over the towing and storage services of towing companies and vehicle storage companies. The [regulatory body] shall establish a complaint mechanism for consumers and insurers. Need to separate the consumer from the insurance company. Multiple agencies may have complaint mechanisms that a consumer may access, in many states there is the Department

of Public Safety, Department of Consumer Protection, Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Transportation and others – this Section should be worded differently. What is wrong with the ability of the consumer to go to court – they have this right in any state and there is no necessity for individual “complaint” departments,

In addition to any penalty imposed under Section 12 of this Act, any for-hire motor carrier engaged in the towing of motor vehicles who violates this Act is subject to sanctions imposed by the [regulatory body] in the State of XXXX. **If we are suddenly going to regulate any for-hire carrier that is towing motor vehicles, performing consensual tows, this needs to be in the definitions as well as in the rest of this proposal. These were already eliminated in the “towing company” definition**

Section 5. Emergency Towing

A. This Section applies to a towing company that engages in, or offers to engage in, emergency towing. Prior to removing a vehicle from a tow truck under this section, a towing company shall take photographs, video or other visual documentation to evidence the vehicle damages, debris, damaged cargo or property, and complications to recovery process. **If this is mandated there has to be a provision for the payment of this service as well as the necessary equipment to perform the service to the towing service/company**

B. Except as provided in Section 5(C), a towing company shall not stop, or cause a person to stop, at the scene of an accident or near a disabled motor vehicle:

- (1) if there is an injury as the result of an accident; or
- (2) for the purpose of:
 - (i) soliciting an engagement for emergency towing services;
 - (ii) moving a motor vehicle from a public street, road, or highway; or
 - (iii) accruing charges in connection with an activity in subsection (i) or (ii)

C. A towing company may stop, or cause a person to stop, at the scene of an accident or near a disabled motor vehicle under the circumstances, or for any of the purposes, described in Section 5(B) if:

- (1) the towing company is requested to stop or to perform a towing service by a law enforcement officer or by authorized state, county, or municipal personnel;
- (2) the towing company is summoned to the scene or requested to stop by the owner or operator of a disabled vehicle; or
- (3) the owner of a disabled motor vehicle has previously provided consent to the towing company to stop or perform a towing service.
- (4) the towing company has reasonable belief that a motorist is in need of immediate aide. The towing company may not offer towing services in this circumstance unless conditions C(1), C(2), or C(3) of this section are met.

D. Except as provided in Sections 5(E) and (F), the owner or operator of a disabled motor vehicle may:

(1) summon to the disabled motor vehicle's location the towing company of the owner's or operator's choice, either directly or through an insurance company's or an automobile club's emergency service arrangement; and

(2) designate the location to which the disabled motor vehicle is to be towed. However, if the location designated by the owner or operator is not a storage facility owned or operated by the towing company, the owner or operator must make arrangements for payment to the towing company at the time the towing company is summoned.

E. Section 5(D) does not apply:

(1) in any case in which the owner or operator of a disabled motor vehicle:

(a.) is incapacitated or otherwise unable to summon a towing company; or

(b.) defers to law enforcement or to authorized state, county, or municipal personnel as to:

(i) the towing company to be summoned; or

(ii) the location to which the disabled motor vehicle is to be towed; or

(2) in the event of a declared emergency

F. The authority of an owner or operator of a disabled vehicle to summon the towing company of the owner's or operator's choice under Section 5(D) shall be superseded by a law enforcement officer or by authorized State, county, or municipal personnel if the towing company (**again refer to the definition of a towing company in the definitions – auto clubs excluded**) of choice of the owner or operator:

(1) is unable to respond to the location of the disabled motor vehicle in a timely fashion; and

(2) the disabled motor vehicle is a hazard; impedes the flow of traffic; or may not legally remain in its location in the opinion of the law enforcement officer or authorized state, county, or municipal personnel.

G. If a disabled motor vehicle is causing or poses a safety hazard to any of the parties at the scene of the disabled motor vehicle, the disabled motor vehicle may be moved by a towing company to a safe location after being released by a law enforcement officer or by authorized state, county, or municipal personnel for that purpose. **The owner or operator of the vehicle must make arrangements for payment to the towing company at the time the towing company moves the vehicle to a safe location unless it is being towed to the towing companies property or storage facility**

H. If a towing company is summoned for emergency towing by the owner or operator of a

disabled motor vehicle, the towing company shall make a record, to the extent available, consisting of:

(1) the first and last name, and telephone number of the person who summoned the towing company to the scene;

(2) the make, model year, vehicle identification number, and license plate number of the disabled motor vehicle.

I. If a towing company is summoned for emergency towing by a law enforcement officer or by authorized state, county, or municipal personnel, the towing company shall make a record, to the extent available, consisting of:

(1) the identity of the law enforcement agency or authorized state, county, or municipal agency, requesting the emergency towing;

(2) the make, model, year, vehicle identification number, and license plate number of the disabled motor vehicle.

J. **Delete this first sentence** [A towing company shall maintain a record created under Sections 5(H) or (I) and provide said record to a law enforcement agency upon request from the time the towing company appears at the scene of the disabled motor vehicle until the time the motor vehicle is towed and released to an authorized third party.] A towing company shall also retain a record created under Sections 5(H) or (I) for a period of two (2) years from the date the disabled vehicle was towed from scene and, throughout said two (2) year period, make the record available for inspection and copying, not later than two (2) business days after receiving a written request from a law enforcement agency, the attorney general, the disabled motor vehicle's owner, or an authorized agent of the disabled motor vehicle's owner.

K. A towing company that performs emergency towing under this Act must properly secure all towed motor vehicles and take all reasonable efforts to prevent further damage (including weather damage) or theft of all towed motor vehicles, including a motor vehicle's cargo and contents. **Opens a whole new area here as to the responsibility of the towing company for a stored vehicle. There are no specifics as to the storage area (fenced, lighted, gated) and there are no provisions for the payment of indoor storage or payment for the use of wrap/tarps to prevent further damage which would include weather damage. Towing companies providing this emergency towing service should post their charges for compliance with weather damage etc.**

Section 6. Commercial Private Property Towing

A. This Section applies to a towing company that engages in, or offers to engage in, private property towing. This Section does not apply to the towing of a motor vehicle from a tow-away zone that is not located on private property. Prior to removing a vehicle from a tow truck under this section, a towing company shall take photographs, video or other visual documentation to evidence the vehicle damages, debris, damaged cargo or property, and complications to recovery process. **Again, if directed to do items above the provision for payment of that service must be made. Towing companies providing this towing service should post their charges for compliance with photography and/or weather damage etc**

B. The owner of private property may establish a tow-away zone on the owner's property. A property owner that establishes a tow-away **zone (spelling error)** under this Section shall

post at the location of the tow-away zone a sign that is clearly visible to the public. The sign must include a statement that the area is a tow-away zone, pertinent contact information, and a description of any persons authorized to park in the area. **In many northeast states the sign must also include the base tow cost and the mileage charge (per mile) as well as any after business hours release fees. Failure of the property owner to post the sign shall be a violation against the property owner not the tow service operator**

C. A towing company that tows a motor vehicle under this Section shall ensure that the motor vehicle is towed to a storage facility that is located within twenty-five (25) miles of the location of the tow-away zone from which the motor vehicle was removed, or, if there is no storage facility located within twenty-five (25) miles of the location of the tow-away zone, to the storage facility nearest to the tow-away zone. ***Drafting Note: Depending on the population density of a State, legislators may consider altering this distance.***

D. If the owner or operator of a motor vehicle that is parked in violation of a tow-away zone arrives at the location of the tow-away zone while the motor vehicle is in the process of being towed, the towing company shall give the owner or operator either oral or written notification that the owner or operator may pay a fee in an amount that is not greater than half of the amount of the fee the towing company normally charges for the release (**this should state the base tow rate not the release fee**) of a motor vehicle. Upon the owner's or operator's payment of the amount specified, the towing company shall release the motor vehicle to the owner or operator, and give the owner or operator a receipt showing the full amount of the fee of the towing company normally charges for the release (**towing**) of a motor vehicle, and the amount of the fee paid by the owner or operator.

E. Not later than two (2) hours after completing a tow of a motor vehicle from private property, a towing company shall provide notice of the towing to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction in the location of the private property. **How is this provided? A cell phone record does not work all the time. In many states it must be faxed or emailed within the two hours – this works well as once done it is now becomes the law enforcement agency that must process the notice onto a NCIC or state law enforcement system record. There are also costs to perform these services that must be addressed if the service is being mandated.**

F. A towing company that performs private property towing under this Section shall properly secure all towed motor vehicles, and take all reasonable efforts to prevent further damage (including weather damage) or theft of all towed motor vehicles, including a motor vehicle's cargo and contents. **Again this opens a whole new area here as to the responsibility of the towing company for a stored vehicle. There are no specifics as to the storage area (fenced, lighted, gated) and there are no provisions for the payment of indoor storage or payment for the use of wrap/tarps to prevent further damage which includes weather damage**

G. This Section does not affect a private property owner's rights under [insert State Statute with respect to abandoned motor vehicles] with respect to abandoned vehicles on the property owner's property.

Section 7. Estimates and Invoices for Towing Services

A. Prior to attaching a vehicle to a tow truck, the towing company shall furnish the vehicle owner, if the owner is present at the scene of a disabled vehicle, a rate sheet listing all rates for

towing services included but not limited to, all rates for towing and associated fees, cleanup charges, labor, storage, and any other services provided by the towing company. A charge in excess of what is reflected on the rate sheet for any service shall be deemed excessive as described in Section 10A. The rate sheet shall also be posted at the towing company's place of business and be made available upon request to consumers. **This may not be practical in all situations and can lead to arguments at the scene, especially if law enforcement has already left the scene. The tow service may have different rates that apply to a nonconsensual tow.**

B. An itemized invoice of actual towing charges assessed by a towing company for a completed tow shall be made available to the owner of the motor vehicle or the owner's authorized agent, which may be an insurance company, not later than one (1) business day after the tow is completed, or the towing company has obtained all necessary information to be included on the invoice, including any charges submitted by subcontractors used by the towing company to complete the tow – whichever occurs later. **If the owners authorized agent is utilized this information must be given to the towing company by the vehicle owner prior to any documentation being given to such entity. In some instances the owner is not known until response is received back from the state of registry, this can take time**

C. The itemized invoice required by this Section must contain the following information:

- a. an invoice number
- b. the location from which the motor vehicle was towed

- c. the name, address, and telephone number of the towing company;
- d. a description of the towed motor vehicle, including the:
 - (i) make;
 - (ii) model;
 - (iii) year;
 - (iv) vehicle identification number; and
 - (v) color
- e. the license plate number and state of registration for the towed motor vehicle;
- f. the cost of the original towing/transport service;
- g. the cost of any vehicle storage fees, expressed as a daily rate;
- h. Other delete [reasonable] fees; including associated costs for the recovery services
- i. the costs for services that were performed under a warranty or that were otherwise performed at no cost to the owner of the motor vehicle.

D. Any reasonable service or fee in addition to the services or fees described in Section 7C, must be set forth individually as a single line item on the invoice required by this section, with an explanation and the exact charge for the service or the exact amount of the fee.

E. A copy of each invoice and receipt submitted by a tow truck operator in accordance with Section 7 shall be retained by the towing company for a period of two (2) years from the date of issuance. Throughout said two (2) year period, the copy of each invoice and receipt shall be made available for inspection and copying not later than two (2) business days after receiving a written order [request] for inspection from:

- a. a law enforcement agency;
- b. the attorney general;
- c. the prosecuting attorney or city attorney having jurisdiction in the location of any of the towing company's xxx State business locations;
- d. the disabled motor vehicle's owner; or

e. the agent of the disabled motor vehicle's owner. **Must be communicated in writing (email or fax) by the vehicle owner to the towing service**

Section 8. Notice Requirements

- A. Within two (2) business days of commencement of towing, the towing company or storage facility must commence a search of the National Motor Vehicle Title Information Systems data base, to obtain the last state of record of the vehicle and then obtain the most current name and address of the person who owns or holds a lien from the State's agency responsible for maintaining motor vehicle title data or an authorized vendor providing real time access to that state database, by electronic means, if available. No storage charges beyond the initial two (2) business days charge will accrue until the notice requirement has been met. If a state does not have a mechanism to provide the above requested information electronically, then the tow company will make all reasonable efforts to obtain the vehicle owner and lien holder information. **Costs for performing this service as well as fees paid to state or government information systems and fees paid for any other information services must be addressed – suggest as a separate posted charge for each service**
- B. Upon obtaining the name and address of the owner and lienholder of the motor vehicle, written notice shall be given directly to the owner and lienholder, and, if known to the towing service or storage facility, **delete [the insurer of the vehicle]**, by certified mail with delivery confirmation within five (5) business days unless the ownership information could not reasonably be obtained within that time. **Costs for performing this service as well as fees paid to state or government information systems and fees paid for any other information services must be addressed – suggest as a separate charge. Many of our towing company members do not subscribe to companies such as ADD, in these cases a mailing to the state for information can take as long as 8 weeks or more until information is sent back – a large amount of the delay is due to privacy restrictions. The process may be initiated within 5 days but no guaranty as to when the information can be obtained and letters sent.**
- C. Notice to the owner or insurer shall contain the following:
- a. The date and time the vehicle was towed;
 - b. The location from which the vehicle was towed;
 - c. The name, address, and telephone number where the vehicle will be located;
 - d. The location, address and phone number where payment and business transactions take place if different from business address;
 - e. The name, address and phone number of the towing company or storage facility;
 - f. A description of the towed vehicle including but not limited to the make, model, year, vehicle identification number and color of the towed vehicle;
 - g. The license plate number and state of registration of the towed vehicle.
- D. If the search result under Section 8(A) is a corporately owned vehicle then the above notice

shall be sent to the state corporate address listed on the registration. The vehicle must be held for up to 60 days in order for the vehicle owner to retrieve the towed vehicle. The rate charged must be comparable to the standard daily rate. If at any time more than one vehicle owned by the same corporation is under your control each vehicle shall be processed under a separate transaction. **Need some help with this as registrations do not consistently record the necessary information, rental companies are always an issue as the registration information is usually a corporate address in another state, by the time notices work their way around it can be more than 60 days until they respond. Law enforcement needs to provide notices to owners and lienholders as the information for owners and lienholders is readily available to them – possibly the insurance companies can fund modifications to the NCIC systems to provide notices automatically eliminating all these problems. It really seems logical that the agencies with the information should do the notifications rather than waiting for non-accessible systems to respond to the towing company information requests. Would reduce overall costs, reduce the storage costs, provide necessary notifications through NCIC or state systems as soon as law enforcement entered on their systems.**

E.

Section 9. Releasing Towed Motor Vehicles

A. This section applies to towing companies that tow and store motor vehicles, and to storage facilities that store motor vehicles towed by a towing company, regardless of whether the towing company and the storage facility are affiliates.

B. Upon payment of all costs incurred against a motor vehicle that is towed and stored under this Act, the towing company or storage facility shall release the motor vehicle to:

- a.) a properly identified person who owns or holds a lien on the motor vehicle; or
- b.) a representative of the responsible insurance company and the insurance representative provides proof of such, **delete the “or” and replace with “and” as the owner is required to release the vehicle to another entity** or, the owner of the motor vehicle approves release of the vehicle to the insurance company representative.

C. An owner, a lienholder, or an insurance company representative has the right to inspect a motor vehicle under normal business hours before accepting return of the motor vehicle under this Section. **Any charges for time spent in escorting personnel in storage lots must be posted, suggest this be done by appointment. Also if anyone from insurance, salvage yard or another towing company enters the facility proof of insurance in the form of a Certificate of Liability Insurance (ACCORD 25 form) for workers compensation as well as employers liability. Many tow companies have adopted this as there have been injury cases with tow companies where the company picking up or inspecting the vehicle did not have coverage and the towing companies insurance had to pay the bills including workers compensation. The procedure for this is also contained in Section 11B of this document – although for the benefit of the insurance company. Example is sub contractors used for inspections and damage assessment**

<http://www.hallandcompany.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/CertificateExample.jpg>

D. A towing service or storage yard must accept payment made by any of the following means from a person seeking to release a motor vehicle under this Section: cash; insurance check; credit card, debit card, money order, or certified check. **No mandate for credit card or debit card**

acceptance should be here, the individual business should make this decision.

E. Upon receiving payment of all costs incurred against a motor vehicle, a towing service or storage yard shall provide to the person making payment an itemized receipt that includes the information set forth in Section 7, to the extent the information is known or available.

F. A towing service or storage yard must be open for business and accessible by telephone during normal business hours. A towing service or storage yard must provide a telephone number that is available on a twenty-four (24) hour basis to receive calls and messages from callers, including calls made outside of normal business hours. All calls made to a towing service or storage yard must be returned within twenty-four (24) hours from the time received. However, if adverse weather, an act of God, an emergency situation, or another act over which the towing service or storage yard has no control prevents the towing service or storage yard from returning calls within twenty-four (24) hours, the towing service or storage yard shall return all calls received as quickly as possible. **24 hour lines are for emergency situations. Time zones and work hours sometimes prevent returning calls, also many times you cannot reach the person who left the message due to shifts or work schedules – need more time to adequately return calls. There are still a lot of “mom and pop” operations and this is not feasible for them – staffing issue.**

Section 10. Fees

A. A towing company shall not charge a fee for towing, clean-up services and/or storage of a vehicle that is excessive or unfairly discriminatory. **This should just be standardized to reflect that 15 minutes time is include in the tow operation – anything over that is billable at the rate on the labor sheet. The phrase “excessive or unfairly discriminatory” is not a measurement that can be quantified.**

B. All services rendered by a tow company, including any warranty or zero cost services, shall be recorded on an invoice. The towing company or the owner or operator of a tow truck shall maintain the records for two (2) years, and shall make the records available for inspection and copying upon written request from law enforcement.

C. A towing company shall furnish a copy of its rate sheet as provided in Section 7A to (insert relevant regulatory body)

Section 11. Tow Company Certificate Requirements

Drafting Note: States that already have a towing certification process in place may wish to supplement its relevant insurance code or regulations with this Section.

A. The [regulatory body] shall approve an application for a towing company certificate or certificate renewal, and shall issue or renew a certificate, provided the applicant submits to the [regulatory body] a completed application on a form prescribed by the [regulatory body], and also pays the application fee set by the [regulatory body].

B. If applicable by state law, an application shall include:

- a. The applicant’s workers’ compensation coverage.
- b. The applicant’s unemployment compensation coverage.

- c. The financial responsibility of an applicant relating to liability insurance or bond requirements according to state XXXX.
- C. The applicant must not have been convicted of fraud or had a civil judgment rendered against it, in the past 5 years, for fraud nor has any officer, director or partner of an applicant that is a corporation or partnership during officer's, director's or partner's tenure. **Most companies have small claims decisions against them, this is a civil judgment – needs work.**

Section 12. Prohibited Acts

- A. A towing company shall not do any of the following:
 - a. falsely represent, either expressly or by implication, that the towing company represents or is approved by any organization which provides emergency road service for disabled motor vehicles.
 - b. require an owner/operator of a disabled motor vehicle, to preauthorize more than 24 hours of storage, or repair work as a condition to providing towing service for the disabled vehicle. **Not sure what this is intended to mean or do**
 - c. charge more than one (1) towing fee when the owner/operator of a disabled vehicle requests transport of the vehicle be towed to a repair facility owned or operated by the towing company **Depending on the situation a double hook is necessary in some instances and should be charged out as such, if the owner of the tow service also owns the contracted repair facility the movement of the vehicle, as directed by the owner, should be a paid movement**

- d. tow a motor vehicle to a repair facility, unless either the owner of the motor vehicle or the owner's designated representative gives consent, and, the consent is given before the motor vehicle is removed from the location from which it is to be towed. This prohibition does not apply to a storage yard that has a repair facility on the same site so long as the vehicle is not moved into the repair facility without consent as stated above. **Some tow companies use a storage lot that is part of another licensee's location, also when covering for another rotational tower this may occur – if they are referring to a situation that intends to commit fraud or entrapment of the customer they should spell that out rather than generalize**

B. A towing company or a storage facility shall not do any of the following:

- a. upon payment of all costs incurred against a motor vehicle that is towed and stored under this Act, refuse to release the motor vehicle to a properly identified person who owns or holds a lien on the motor vehicle, or a representative of the responsible insurance company **when the owner of the vehicle has approved its release to that company.**

(i) However, a towing company or storage facility shall not release a motor vehicle in any case in which a law enforcement agency has ordered the motor vehicle not to be released, or in any case in which a judicial order countermands its release.

- b. refuse to permit a properly identified person who owns or holds a lien on a motor vehicle, or a representative of the responsible insurance company to inspect the motor vehicle before all costs incurred against the motor vehicle are paid or the motor vehicle is released. **Again need to reference the Certificate of Liability Insurance being presented as proof of employer's liability as well as workers compensation prior to inspection or yard entry. Any entity inspecting the vehicle should be able to provide a document that would substantiate their inspection.**

- c. [charge any storage fee for a stored motor vehicle with respect to any day on which release of the motor vehicle, or inspection of the motor vehicle by the owner, lienholder, or insurance company, is not permitted during normal business hours by the towing company or storage facility]. **Delete this – if the inspection company or insurance company does not have vehicle owner's authorization or the company does not have proper credentials including Certificate of Liability Insurance they are not given access**

Section 13. Penalties and Enforcement

Drafting Note: Legislators should consider provisions that establish rules that allow for the [regulatory body] to be responsible for the administration and enforcement, including inspections, investigations, penalties, and license revocations, of all towing businesses and towing service storage lots in the state of XXXX.

Drafting Note: Legislators should further consider provisions allowing for an independent cause of action for insurers to recover a motor vehicle that has been towed and subject to an unreasonable billing by the tower for any excessive towing/storage charges. Again these terms are vague and subject to many interpretation, definitive terms are necessary for any actions – if no definitive terms can be provided a court of law can make decisions based on whatever evidence is available.

Drafting Note: Legislators should further consider that the free enterprise system is preserved

and that the interests of the towing company are protected from over regulation. This document is a perfect example of how a major company can seek to provide controls over smaller independent businesses for its own purposes and profits.